

Golden

Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society
Latrobe Valley Group Inc.
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Grevillea chrysophaea – Golden Grevillea

This Month

- Event** An afternoon of propagation by division, followed by a 'potluck' meal and 'moothing' evening.
- Location** Col and Mary's garden, 130 Tebb Terrace, Jeeralang Junction.
- Date** April 12, 13, or 14 to be decided when the weather can be determined
- Time** 2PM through the evening.

We have had workshops on propagation by cuttings and seed but not by division. There will be potted plants as well as some dug out of the garden to try your hand at dividing and re-potting, and you can take home the fruits of your labour. Bring along a meal course of your choice (soup, salad, main, desert) to share. When it gets dark, Mike will set up the mothing screen to see what night-time flying insects we can attract and identify.

In this issue:

Page

- 2 Leader's Report – Jill Fidler
- 3 Editor's Notes – Col Jackson
- 4 - 5 Plants in my Garden – Mike Beamish
- 5 Garden orchid surprise – Diane Aumann
- 6 Not just dying...falling over too – Daryl Radnall
- 7 Book Review – The Compact Australian Bird Guide – Ian Fraser
- 8 Coming events of interest.
- 9 APS Latrobe Valley Group Calendar
- 9 Rainfall registration charts

On the 23rd of March, 20 members enjoyed a bistro lunch at the Morwell Bowling Club and a talk by a long-time friend of our group, Marilyn Bull (nee Grey). She and her husband Geoff now spend many months of the year visiting remote parts of the country and adding to her vast knowledge of Australian flora. Her latest trip to the north-west of Western Australia included Mt Augustus National Park and the remote Dragon Tree Soak Nature Reserve in the Great Sandy Desert. Travelling with a 4WD club, she traced her route, starting from Ceduna. Knowing the best time to travel, she shared many beautiful slides of the abundant winter flowers, including Mulgas, Sennas, Eremophilas, and the Dragon Tree (*Sesbania Formosa*). This unusual tree has the largest flowers of the pea family; beautiful creamy white blooms, usually in pairs. Of interest too, was the Burrowing Bee, one of 800 species of solitary bees in W.A. They burrow into bare clay flats and lay a single egg.



After the talk, we remembered all the times over the years when Marilyn has joined us for meetings and excursions. Just one big happy plant family.

I recently joined a quarterly zoom meeting of the Committee of Management (APS Vic.). One report, which might be of interest, was from Neil Marriott, regarding conservation in the Grampians. Accompanied by Russell Larke from RBGC they surveyed a small group of 17 plants of *Grevillea Gariwerdensis*. They have applied to the Federal Government for a listing as 'nationally endangered'. The regrowth was being grazed by animals, likely deer. Funds have been allocated for deer control throughout the Grampians.

Now for Jill's odd spot: a message from "Environment for the Americas", an annual global awareness-raising campaign to celebrate the amazing journeys of migratory birds. On March 18th, at a conference in Brisbane, the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership, (EAAFP) became an official partner of World Migratory Bird Day. Held on the 2nd Saturday of May and October. As usual there is a wealth of information on the internet. It is heartening to know that there is worldwide recognition of the importance of migrating birds and the hazards they encounter, such as wind farms, on their journeys.

On the 2nd of April I will be at the APS Vic. Display at MIFGS. I should have some news and pictures for next month.

Looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting at the Jackson's, see blurb on page 1.



The rains that the garden has craved have arrived. We have had a couple of days of misty, light rain, a few hours of glorious sunshine, then a day of serious wet stuff. As usual, I prowl around the garden with the camera, looking for inspiration before hitting the keyboard. The misty rain always provides some fascinating photos with droplets of all sizes sitting on or hanging from foliage. I don't know if



this is the start of the 'autumn break' but it is certainly a welcome relief for the plants. You know the autumn break is due when it's hard to find decent flowers. Fortunately, the Banksias are winding up, with *B. integrifolia*, *B. serrata*, and a few forms of *B. spinosa* all getting into the swing of it. One plant of Paper Daisy is defying the trend of all the rest and is looking



great. It may be in a better position, but I think it was probably just in the right place at the right time. I propagate these throughout the year and when they are ready in their tubes, I plant them. Sometimes I end up with stunted, ugly plants with few flowers, and sometimes they

thrive. For this one, the stars aligned!

The sunny hours between rains bring the buzz of busy insects around a couple of species in the garden though. There are some shrubs of *Baeckea* in the tough soil (rock!) behind the house that have survived for nearly 30 years and are currently covered in tiny white flowers. There is



also the lemon-scented tea-tree out the front, also a veteran of about 30 years, that is covered in flowers. Both these species were attracting lots of insect wildlife.



And while on wildlife, this month's critter photos are this beetle found on a Banksia and this tiny bat that Mary found in the tub beside the washing machine. She declared it an unwelcome guest and it was left to me to re-home it into one of our wood stacks.

Species: *Pterostylis truncata*.

Family: Orchidaceae.

Derivation:

Pterostylis: From Greek, *pteron*, meaning "wing", and *stylos*, meaning "pillar, pole or column" and referring to the broad wings found on the upper part of the column in this genus of orchids.

truncata: From Latin, *truncatus*, meaning "cut off", referring to the abrupt ending of the galea (hood) of this species.

Common Name: Brittle Greenhood, Little Dumpies.



Distribution: Extinct over much of its former habitat in south-central Victoria due to habitat loss and weed invasion, small populations still remain in the You Yangs and Long Forest areas to the west of Melbourne. It's still common throughout the ranges of NSW and the ACT and may also be in SE Queensland.

Description: Arising from an underground tuberoid, non-flowering plants form a ground-hugging basal rosette, consisting of 3-8 ovate leaves, up to 3cm long and 2cm wide with entire margins. Flowering plants don't form a rosette, but produce a single stem up to 15cm tall, usually shorter, bearing up to 6 stem leaves (30mm x 5mm) and a single flower up to 45mm long and 20mm wide that is translucent white with green or reddish-brown striping. The flower consists of 6 highly modified tepals (3 sepals and 3 petals) arranged around a central column comprised of the reproductive parts of the flower. The dorsal sepal and 2 petals are fused into an open-faced 'hood' shape, while the 2 lateral sepals are fused for enough of their length to cover the open face of the hood and for their free points to form 'horns' over the hood. The third petal is called the labellum, is very sensitive to touch and sits inside the hood where its tip is only just visible through the opening in the hood. When a potential pollinating insect enters the hood, the labellum is triggered to trap the insect inside the flower and force it to exit the flower via a route past the column that will assist pollination of the flower. Ingenious!

Opinion: Orchids are great little plants, but keep in mind that they are all protected in the wild, some are very sensitive to disturbance and hence, are vulnerable/threatened/endangered. Never collect plants from wild populations and take care if you are undertaking activities around their habitats. My plants are obtained from reputable and legal sources (yes, I know that they all originated from plants collected from

the bush back when that was the norm and before we knew better, but now we do know better, so don't be part of the problem!) with the aim of taking the pressure off the wild populations and hopefully increasing their numbers in cultivation, sometimes for re-introduction back into the wild.

Little Dumpies are one of the easier orchids to grow and maintain in a garden and I keep mine in a hanging basket, to provide excellent drainage and prevent the soil from staying too damp, which will cause the tubers to rot, particular in the hot weather when the tubers are dormant. Hanging also keeps the pots off the ground and away from a lot of the pests and bugs which live in our gardens but are not so prevalent out in the wild. It's amazing how much damage a single slug or snail can do to your greenhoods in a very short time!

Sources: Backhouse – Bush Beauties, The Wild Orchids of Victoria, Australia (2019).
Jones - A Complete Guide to the Native Orchids of Australia (2021).
Online – Google, AVH: The Australasian Virtual Herbarium, VicFlora: Flora of Victoria.

Garden orchid surprise.

By Diane Aumann

This Potato Orchid [*Gastrodia sesamoides* Ed.] popped up in December on the left-hand side track next to the fence, protected by a Grevillea. It's a very dry position and gets little sun or rain. This area has been cleared for many years. It will be interesting to see if it comes up again next year!



Not just dying...falling over too.

By Daryl Radnall

Returning home after about three weeks in South Australia I was greeted by what seemed to be an awful lot of fallen timber. Lots of large branches and trees down, some of which had damaged other plants in the garden. My first day home was spent swinging on a chain saw clearing up the mess, a job I did not particularly want. The main culprit was a Black Wattle, *Acacia mearnsii*, which split in half. It was multi trunked for some reason but is not so anymore. The fallen half was not happy enough changing the appearance of the tree but decided to halve a few other trees in the process. A fire wheel tree, *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, was the main sufferer, being chopped in half by the wattle. These are not fast growing, and it has been in the garden for many years but although now lop-sided I'm hoping it will survive. An Illawarra Flame Tree, *Brachychiton*

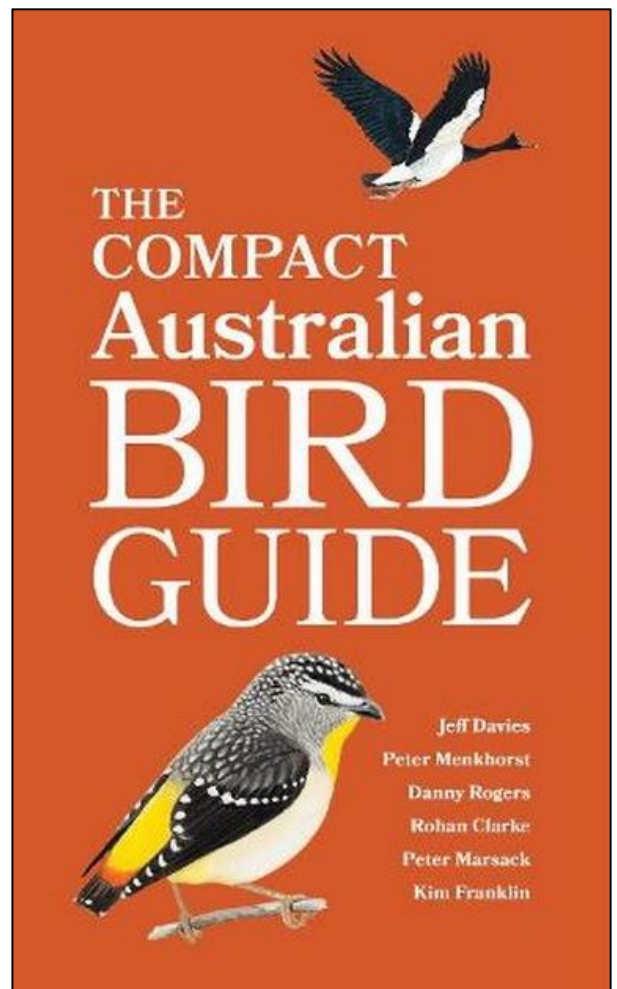


acerifolius, also suffered some unplanned pruning and lost quite a few branches but should pick itself up. Another loss was a Queensland Silver Wattle, *Acacia podalyrifolia*, which was blown over. This was a spectacular wattle with blue/silver foliage and bright yellow ball shaped flowers in spring, but it had split in a previous storm. I guess it was a bit on the brittle side and is now on the bonfire heap.

There was a fair amount of other fallen timber, mainly gum tree branches that did little damage to the rest of the garden. They still needed cleaning up as some were rather large. My burn pile is getting bigger by the day.

Firstly I can't believe that it's now five years since the much-anticipated CSIRO field guide to Australian birds appeared. My review at the time was glowing, despite initial hesitation as to the necessity or even wisdom of introducing a fifth national field guide into the market, a situation I believe to be unique in the world. Aside from an unfortunate issue with the index (resolved by the time of the next printing), there was little to criticise and plenty to like. I regard it as up there with Pizzey and Knight's Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, which is high praise indeed. The first time I took it into the field I was able finally to identify Russet-tailed Thrush with confidence, based on the very clear two wing bars which other guides have mysteriously overlooked! I was hooked then. I was anticipating a phone application next, but instead CSIRO have opted to follow up with this compact ('pocket') guide. Michael Morcombe launched such a version of his guide back in 2004, just four years after his unexpected (but good) full field guide was published; I gather it was fairly well received, but I'm unaware of other such endeavours since then. I'm not sure how much appetite there is for such pocket guides, but perhaps it's a compromise between a traditional hard copy guide (which very many people still greatly appreciate) and a phone app, and in any case I'm sure that CSIRO will have done their marketing research. It's about 55% of the page size of the full guide, with less than half the number of pages. They've updated some taxonomy, and followed the original scheme of ordering the species accounts to keep together 'species most likely to be found together in the field', rather than a taxonomic order; I confess to still finding this a bit unsettling. Most of the text has gone (there are illustrations on every page, rather than just on the right), along with most information on subspecies. For that we are redirected to the full guide, so it is expected that we will have both books. I don't entirely understand it, but if you feel the need for a field guide to fit into your pocket, and are happy with identifying mostly from pictures with limited assistance from text, this is a good one. I need words too though.

The Compact Australian Bird Guide Jeff Davies, Peter Menkhorst, Danny Rogers, Rohan Clarke, Peter Marsack, Kim Franklin CSIRO Publishing. 264 pages. RRP \$35



[Ian Fraser is a Canberra-based professional naturalist and writer. In 2012 he launched the natural history blog 'Ian Fraser, Talking Naturally', at <http://ianfrasertalkingnaturally.blogspot.com.au/> This contribution was submitted by Meg Byers, who knows Ian through previous environmental tours in Australia. Editor]

Coming events of interest

Note: Please check the Vic APS website for cancellations before attending.,

29 March to 2 April 2023 – Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS), Carlton Gardens and Royal Exhibition Building. Website: <https://melbflowershow.com.au>.

1 April 2023 – APS Geelong **Australian Native Plant Sale**, 'Wirrawilla', Lovely Banks. 8.30 am to 4.00 pm.

15 April 2023 – APS Heathcote Plant and Flower Show. Mechanics Institute, 121 High Street, Heathcote.

22 April 2023 - APS Yarra Yarra Autumn Plant Sale, Eltham Community & Reception Centre, Eltham. 10 am – 4 pm.

29 April 2023 - APS Mornington Peninsula Plant Sale. 10 am to 3 pm. The Briars, Mt Martha.

29-30 April 2023 – Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens plant sale 10am to 4pm Sat, 10am to 3pm Sun. Southern gate (Gate E) RBG Melbourne.

13 May 2023 – APS Melton and Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale. 9am to 1pm. The venue is expected to be St Andrews Uniting Church at Bacchus Marsh, to be confirmed

24 & 25 June 2023 – APS Ballarat Winter Flower Show. Flower show, plant sales etc. Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanic Gardens, Gilles Street, Ballarat. 10 am – 4 pm.

2 September 2023 – APS Cardinia Region Group Plant Sale at Akoonah Park, Princes Hwy, Berwick, from 9 am to 3 pm. To be located in the undercover fruit and vegetable market area.

9 & 10 September 2023 – APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo. Eltham Community & Reception Centre, 801 Main Road Eltham. 10.00 am - 4.00 pm both days.

16 & 17 September 2023 – Angair Wildflower Show & Art Show, Anglesea Memorial Hall, McMillan Street, Anglesea. 10 am to 4 pm. Wildflower display, indigenous plant sales, art show and painting sales.

23 & 24 September 2023 – APS Bendigo Flower Show, Victory College, Kairn Road, Strathdale (Bendigo).

23 & 24 September 2023 – APS Grampians host APS Vic September COMM. To be confirmed.

30 September & 1 October 2023 – APS Grampians Group Pomonal Native Flower Show, Pomonal Hall.

7 October 2023 – APS Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase, Echuca Masonic Lodge Hall, 426 High Street, Echuca. 9 am to 4 pm. Flower show, native plant sales, basket weaving display, floral art and painting sales.

14 October 2023 – APS Mitchell Plant Expo and Sale. Wallan Community Centre, Bentinck Street, Wallan. From 9 am to 3 pm.

21 & 22 October 2023 - APS Ballarat Spring Flower Show. Flower show, plant sales etc. Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanic Gardens, Gilles Street, Ballarat. 10 am – 4 pm. (to be confirmed)

30 September to 4 October, 2024 – ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference hosted by APS Victoria in Melbourne.

2023 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar

Month	Day	Date	Activity	Time
April	April 12, 13, or 14 depending on weather. An email notice will be sent a few days before.		Practical 'hands-on' activity on propagation by division. Potluck meal (everyone bring a dish of your choice – soup, salad, main or desert). Nothing evening (attracting, observing, photographing, identifying the local moths).	2 PM through evening
May	Friday	12	Austplant Nursery and Gardens visit.	
June	TBD	TBD	Mint Bushes by Miriam Ford	
Aug – Annual General Meeting				
Oct – Possible trip to Blackwood/Wombat State Forest/Melton Botanic Gardens.				
Jan or Feb 2024 – Possible trip to Edski Lodge at Mt Baw Baw – to be discussed.				



Banksia integrifolia flower buds

Rainfall for 2022 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)	67	30	81	94	60	170	90	198	60	172	193	89	1302
Brian	Drouin (east)	74	11	76	86	75	145	77	199	66	199	183	95	1286
Warren	Yarragon	107	5	55	68	58	191	97	163	64	144	196	107	1253
Wayne	Tanjil South	83	15	63	98	107	130	74	161	96	203	138	127	1295
Peter	Mirboo North	62	8	67	68	50	150	88	189	73	136	157	66	1113
Judy	Moe South	73	13	64	55	93	209	72	165	67	128	236	89	1264
Mike	Boolarra	72	6	74	60	54	162	69	166	66	119	168	94	1108
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	68	11	85	75	46	164	72	161	62	133	171	85	1131
John	Traralgon South	88	10	31	56	28	175	50	136	49	126	146	54	949

Rainfall for 2023 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)	21	42											63
Brian	Drouin (east)	22	44											66
Warren	Yarragon	49	35											84
Wayne	Tanjil South	25	43											68
Peter	Mirboo North	35	57											92
Judy	Moe South	26	33											59
Mike	Boolarra	20	43											63
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	24	36											60
John	Traralgon South													0

<https://apsvic.org.au/aps-latrobe-valley/>

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Golden Grevillea
Grevillea chrysophaea

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Title page photo: *Grevillea chrysophaea* at Holey Plains State Park by Mike Beamish